

## APPLICANT CARD RECORDS

## I. VOLUME, COMPOSITION AND HOUSING OF APPLICANT CARD RECORDS

## A. VOLUME

There are approximately  cards in the applicant card files maintained in the Records and Services Division, Office of Personnel.

## B. HOUSING

The cards are filed alphabetically in trays which are spread out on tables in the File Room. This housing system requires that Applicant File Section Clerks pace back and forth when checking applicant correspondence against the Applicant Card File. The destruction of cards containing obsolete or information of dubious value would present a partial solution to this seemingly inefficient and cumbersome filing system.

## C. COMPOSITION

1. A survey of 612 applicant cards (one tray of cards selected at random) was made to determine the composition of the Applicant Card File and to analyze and evaluate the information contained in each of the different types of card records of which the applicant file is composed.
2. A breakdown of type of records in Applicant Card File is shown below. The figures are based on the sampling of 612 cards.

<u>TYPE OF RECORD</u>	<u>NUMBER OF CARDS IN SAMPLE</u>	<u>NUMBER OF CARDS IN APPLICANT FILE</u>	<u>PERCENT OF APPLICANT FILE</u>
Folder Routing Cards and Special Note Cards	143		24%
File Destroyed Cards	130		21%
Contact Letter Control Cards	35		6%
Interview Report Cards	304		49%
TOTAL	612		100%

(23 Jan. 1961 - Study by  Regs. Grp., OP)

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D. USE OF APPLICANT CARD RECORDS  
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1. The Applicant Card Records are records of contacts made with applicants and are used by the Office of Personnel in the implementation of the Agency recruiting program.
2. These cards are really of primary interest only to the Office of Personnel--exceptions to be noted are those cards which give special instructions to refer questions or correspondence to particular officials outside the Office of Personnel. The Office of Security and CI Staff are not interested in a record of all contacts made with the Agency. The Director's office might at some time be interested in any contacts made with applicants recommended by Congressmen or high ranking officials in the Agency or Government.
3. The Office of Personnel uses these cards to recruit personnel and to answer correspondence from individuals who have had previous contacts with the Agency. Some files on applicants who have been considered as potentially good candidates for positions in which the Agency is or may be interested have been coded, and thus are helpful in finding possible candidates to fill vacancies which arise from time to time. Cards or files which are not coded are of no use in recruiting personnel unless the individual writes in or is recommended for employment. Incoming correspondence from prospective applicants is checked against the Applicant Card File. If it is determined that the individual has contacted the Agency previously, a record of previous action taken or specific information concerning the individual is helpful in determining the nature of the reply to the individual. The most significant use of these cards is to determine if there is any record on the individual which indicates a definite reason for discouraging him in seeking employment in the Agency--if so, no application forms will be sent, thus saving the Agency from processing another application needlessly and also avoiding the possible encouragement of an applicant in a useless pursuit of a job. The use of these cards in answering correspondence from previous applicants involves the question of the Agency maintaining good public relations--correspondence must be answered and replies must be tactful. In many cases information which appears to have a minimal use sometimes gives a good clue as to the type of reply to be made.
4. In making this study the advisability of keeping all present records of contacts has been weighed against the problems involved in maintaining voluminous files, and careful consideration has been given to the calculated risk involved in selecting files for destruction. Also recognition is given to the fact that in 1961 and for some time to come the Agency will not likely be recruiting many persons except JOTs, communicators, clerical, and individuals in highly specialized fields. This to some extent makes a great percent of applicant cards of less significance because replies to much of our current and future correspondence is and will be answered "no vacancies", regardless of encouraging or discouraging information contained in previous records.
5. The analysis of the value of the information on the sampling of Applicant Record Cards and the recommendations made concerning the selection of cards to be maintained or to be destroyed were made in view of the facts and considerations discussed above.

## II. FOLDER ROUTING CARD AND SPECIAL NOTE CARDS

## A. GENERAL

1. The Folder Routing Card is used as a charge-out record for applicant folders, which are filed in RSD and in Records Center.
2. Special Note Cards are special flag cards which give specific instructions to refer questions or correspondence concerning applicant to particular officials or offices in the Agency. Files or information on these individuals are not maintained in the Applicant File Section of RSD in some of these cases.

Blank  
5x3  
cards  
used

## B. RECOMMENDATION

The Folder Routing Cards and Special Note Cards must, of course, be maintained as an index to files or information on applicants.

## III. CONTACT LETTER CONTROL CARDS (FORM 38)

## A. GENERAL

The Contact Letter Control Card is an index card which indicates that the Agency has sent a letter to a prospective applicant and that this letter and other pertinent correspondence are filed in the Applicant File Section. This type of correspondence is referred to as "papers." In some cases the card indicates that the "papers" are charged-out to Divisions in Office of Personnel.

## B. ANALYSIS

1. The "papers" do not include a PHS but in some cases the letters from the applicants do include some information concerning their qualifications and interests. A great percent of the Agency letters included in these "papers" are routine replies to applicants--letters sending forms, stating no vacancies or other routine replies to inquiries concerning employment in the Agency.
2. The sampling indicates that approximately 75% of the correspondence included in these "papers" was initiated prior to 1960--over 30% of the cards indicated that the correspondence from applicant was dated prior to 1957.

## C. CONCLUSIONS

1. The greatest percent of these "papers" are of no interest to the Agency since in most cases there was no follow-up by the applicant or the Agency.

2. There is no reason for the Agency to keep correspondence which is over 90 days old unless there is evidence of high-level interest in the applicant or evidence that the applicant possesses unusual qualifications which may be of future interest to the Agency. If the correspondence contains information which should be maintained, it should either be made into a permanent file or reported on a File Destroyed Card.
3. "Papers" which are of a routine nature should be destroyed and no record made of the destruction. Since the Office of Security concurred in the referenced memorandum, \*this is evidence that from a security point of view the Agency has no interest in keeping permanent records of routine Agency contacts with applicants.

#### D. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that papers which are more than 90 days old should be destroyed if correspondence is of a routine nature and no File Destroyed Card or record of such correspondence be maintained. If the correspondence is of other than a routine nature, the correspondence and control card should be referred to the Division in the Office of Personnel which initiated such correspondence for review and determination of action to be taken. If it is determined that "papers," which are over 90 days old, should be maintained, they should be made into a permanent applicant file; if they contain information indicating high-level interest or security problems, such information should be recorded on a File Destroyed Card. Thus Contact Letter Control Cards would be used as an index for current correspondence with applicants.
2. The File Section, RSD, has recently set up a system to flag "papers" so action may be taken when such papers are 90 days old. If no reply has been received, these papers and the control card should be destroyed--thus, in the future, correspondence with applicants which is of no future interest to the Agency will not be maintained. (Decisions for destruction of "papers" would always be made by Division initiating correspondence).

#### IV. FILE DESTROYED CARD (FORM 37) *"Record of Destroyed Applicant File"*

##### A. GENERAL

The File Destroyed Card records the fact that the applicant folder has been destroyed, the date of destruction, the year of individual's application, and pertinent information concerning the applicant.

##### B. ANALYSIS

1. Attachment 1 gives a breakdown of types of information given on the File Destroyed Cards which were analyzed.

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2. The analysis of the information given on File Destroyed Cards showed that about 1/3 of these cards indicate security, medical or panel disapproval, unfavorable test results or interview, or covert contacts. The greatest percent of the other File Destroyed Cards are of no value to the Agency. About 1/3 of all the File Destroyed Cards give no information except individual's name and a check by the statement "File Not Coded - Over 2 Years Old"--this indicates nothing except at one time there was a file.

C. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

1. It is concluded that if a file has been destroyed and there is no evidence of Agency disapproval action or Agency interest, there is no reason to maintain a record of the fact that such files were destroyed.
2. It is recommended that all File Destroyed Cards be destroyed, except those which contain information indicating:
  - a. Security disapproval,
  - b. Medical disapproval,
  - c. Panel disapproval,
  - d. Unfavorable assessment,
  - e. High level interest, or
  - f. Covert contacts.

V. INTERVIEW REPORT CARDS (FORM 87) (*Field Reject Card*)

A. GENERAL

1. The Interview Report Card (formerly known as the Reject Card) gives the applicant's name, address, date of birth; the date of interview, and the name and comments of the interviewer.
2. Approximately one half of all the applicant cards are Interview Report Cards.

B. ANALYSIS

1. Attachment 2 is a chart which gives a good picture of the type of information which is given on the Interview Report Cards.
2. An analysis of 304 Interview Report Cards indicates:
  - a. About 14% give some evidence of
    - (1) possible security, medical, or personality problems,
    - (2) Congressional or high level Agency interest in applicant, or
    - (3) covert interest or contact.

The greater percent of these reports indicate applicants have relatives in foreign countries.

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- b. About 66% indicate that the applicant was not qualified for (or interested in) a position in the Agency. Attention is called to Attachment 2 which shows that 10% of the Interview Report Cards gave no information regarding applicant's qualifications.
  - c. About 20% indicate that the applicant had at the time of interview some potential--over one half of these reports were made prior to 1957.
3. Attachment 2 shows the breakdown as to type of position for which the applicant was being interviewed. Attention is called to the following:
- a. About 36% of the ~~Interview Reports~~ <sup>Forms 87</sup> (approximately 33,000 cards in the Applicant Card File) are reports on clerical, guard, or courier applicants.
  - b. About 18% of the ~~Interview Reports~~ <sup>Forms 87</sup> (approximately 16,000 cards in the Applicant Card File) do not indicate the type of position for which the applicant was being interviewed.
  - c. A very small percent of the ~~Interview Reports~~ <sup>Forms 87</sup> indicate applicant interest or potential in the fields of engineering, science, medicine, foreign languages, area studies, and communications--areas in which the Agency is particularly interested.

C. CONCLUSIONS

1. The analysis of 304 ~~Interview Reports~~ <sup>Forms 87</sup> indicates that over 75% of these cards (approximately 68,000 cards in the applicant card file) are of dubious value.
2. It is concluded that ~~Interview Reports~~ <sup>Forms 87</sup> which indicate that the applicant is not qualified and reports which give very little information about the applicant should not be maintained in the Applicant Card File except in those cases where there is evidence of security, medical or personality problems, or high-level or covert interest in the applicant.
3. ~~Interview Reports~~ <sup>Forms 87</sup> which indicate that the applicant had training and experience prior to 1957 have little or no value if the applicant or the Agency has not made a follow-up by 1 January 1961. However, to be on the safe side any report which indicates that the applicant possessed qualifications or abilities (or was taking specialized training at time of interview) in areas of particular interest to the Agency should probably be maintained in case the applicant might contact the Agency in the future. In such cases

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areas of particular interest means engineering, science, economics, communications, foreign languages and foreign area knowledge.

4. ~~Interview Cards~~ <sup>Forms 87</sup> which indicate that the applicant possessed after 1957 qualifications for positions in the Agency, other than clerical or courier, should be screened very carefully. It is difficult to establish specific criteria for the destruction or maintenance of this group of cards for it involved the question of what areas of work the Agency may have an interest in the future and an evaluation of the training and experience reported. In general, cards which definitely indicate that the applicant has had experience or college training in a specialized field or was in college or the military at time of interview should be maintained. As a safety measure, all of this group of cards selected for destruction should be reviewed by a Placement Officer in POD.
5. ~~Interview Report Cards~~ <sup>Forms 87</sup> on applicants for clerical, guard or courier positions (except in those cases where there is evidence of security, medical, personality problems, panel disapproval, or high level or covert interest) can be safely destroyed. The calculated risk involved in the destruction of these cards is very little because replies to correspondence from these individuals would probably be handled in the same manner as letters from applicants who had made no previous contact with the Agency--replies would be based on present need for their services and information included in recent correspondence.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A general "rule-of-the-thumb" to be followed in screening ~~Interview Cards~~ <sup>Forms 87</sup> should be: If the information on the card definitely indicates that the Agency should or should not encourage the applicant if he contacts the Agency in the future, the card should be maintained. In one case the card may help the Agency find a good candidate; in the other case it may prevent the Agency from processing the individual's application and rejecting him the second time, which might cause bad public relations.
2. Maintain all cards which contain information which indicates:
  - a. A possible security problem
  - b. A possible medical problem
  - c. A marked personality problem
  - d. Congressional or high level Agency interest
  - e. Covert interest or contact.
3. Maintain all cards that indicate that the applicant possessed (after 1957) qualifications or abilities other than clerical which are likely to be of future use to the Agency. Cards that indicate that the applicant possessed training and/or experience prior to 1957 in areas of special interest to the Agency should also be maintained.

- Form 37*
4. Destroy all ~~Interview Report Cards~~ which are reports on clerical or courier applicants, except cards described in paragraph 2 above. [This type of card is currently not filed.]

*Form 37*

  5. Destroy all ~~Interview Report Cards~~ (except those described in paragraph 2 above) which indicate:
    - a. No information regarding qualifications
    - b. Applicant possessed limited or no qualifications at time of interview

## VI. SUMMARY

## A. GENERAL

1. The study made of the Applicant Card File maintained in RSD indicates that a systematic culling of these cards is very necessary to make this file more effective, to increase efficiency in our filing operations, and to conserve filing space. The reduction of Agency files is a matter to be given special consideration prior to moving into the new building. If the volume of Applicant File Cards is substantially reduced these records could probably be housed in a Rotary File which would save time and effort of file clerks and also eliminate the possibility of record cards being lost.
2. The Chief, RSD, has estimated that the Applicant Card File could be reduced from its present volume of 185,000 to 75,000 cards. The study indicates that this is probably an accurate estimate of the reduction which could be safely made. This conclusion was reached on the basis that:
  - a. About 3/4 of the File Destroyed Cards <sup>(Form 37)</sup> contained practically no information about the respective applicants;
  - b. About 3/4 of the ~~Interview Report Cards~~ <sup>Form 37</sup> contain little or no information on the respective applicants which would be of interest to the Agency now or in the future, and
  - c. The greatest percent of the <sup>Form 38</sup> Contact Letter Control Cards would be destroyed if all "Papers" over 90 days old which contained only routine correspondence were screened and destroyed.

## B. CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES PROPOSED FOR CULLING THE APPLICANT CARD FILE

1. Although this study indicates that a great percent of the Applicant cards can be safely destroyed, mass destruction of



any type of these records is not implied--meaning that a careful review of every card must be made to determine if it should be maintained or destroyed. General criteria for the maintenance and destruction of applicant card files is proposed in the recommendations set forth in this paper. However, specific instructions which amplify and explain criteria are necessary to guide the individuals selected to cull these cards. I understand that some work has been done in RSD in drafting instructions which define what is meant by security, medical, personality problems and listing areas of work in which the Agency is particularly interested. Possibly this paper and the charts attached will be helpful in giving examples of cards which can be safely destroyed or which should be maintained in the permanent card file.

2. It is suggested that all cards selected for destruction in the initial screening be reviewed by appropriate persons in RSD and POD prior to destruction.

#### C. SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

1. It is concluded that a thorough culling of the Applicant Card File should be accomplished at this time and that plans should be made to screen these files every three years. Consideration might be given to stamping cards which indicate security, medical or personality problems, and high-level interest or covert interest as "permanent records"--this would make future screening easier.
2. A review of these files shows that many of these cards should never have been filed--the information on many cards is so inadequate that it gives no clue as to what action should be taken if the individual contacts the Agency. I understand that Chief, RSD, and Chief, POD, are taking steps to reduce the number of cards to be filed in the Applicant Card File in the future and to ensure that cards, particularly ~~Interview Report Cards~~ *Forms 37*, include significant information which is necessary to help the Office of Personnel determine what immediate or future action should be taken in regard to the applicants who have been contacted. This should certainly be done if we are to have an effective Applicant Card File.

#### D. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the project proposed by the Chief, RSD, to conduct a systematic culling of the Applicant Card File be approved and that the Chief, RSD, and Chief, POD, jointly prepare specific instructions to guide the individuals who will be assigned to the task of culling the applicant cards.